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THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE FOR FEMALE TEXTILE-DESIGN BLOGGERS

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THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE FOR FEMALE TEXTILE-DESIGN
BLOGGERS

by

Khadijah Baaqil

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
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THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE FEMALE TEXTILE-DESIGN BLOGGERS

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A review of existing literature demonstrates the need for additional research on female home-based business owners. This study aimed to partially fill the literature gap by exploring the demographic profile of female home-based textile-design bloggers, a unique segment of the female home-based business world.

The findings of the qualitative content analysis of the 30 designers' blogs and 138 blog posts included the findings of their age, nationality and ethnic identity, current place of residence, family status, educational background, occupation, and socioeconomic status. These findings were then reduced into numbers and percentages. Findings of the analysis show that designers vary from implicitly or explicitly posting their demographic information; some designers are very up front about who they are while others are less revealing and their information must be obtained by inference.

The findings highlighted the fact that designers were more open to discussing their parental status than their marital status, both under the category of family status. On the other hand, age and income were rarely shared openly. Analysis of blog content found that of the designers that publicized work information (n=27), the majority (n=23) only own and operate a home-based business, while a few (n=4) had a day job outside of the house in addition to their HBB. The findings show that designers mostly (n=7) have informal education in design as opposed to a college or university degree (n=4). Findings

also demonstrate that the use of e-commerce and other tools such as CAD are indispensable to home-based textile designers.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Throughout history, women have taken part in industrial work from their own homes, particularly in the fields of textile design, clothing design, and manufacturing. While this has varied to some degree among different cultures, women have been dominant and the stories about home-based textile production uniquely belong to women (Rasch, 2010).

In modern times, there have been many technological advancements such as computer aided design (CAD) and print-on-demand (POD) that have been helping home-based women designers simplify their workload. The last thirty years have seen a revolution in textile design, with modern digital design and printing methods such as POD speeding up the transfer of design to fabric, allowing the creation of complex and intricate patterns in millions of colors with layer upon layer of design (Bowles & Isaac, 2009; Ujiie, 2006).

Per the United States Census Bureau (2016), in 2010, 13.4 million people worked at least one day at home per week, an increase of over 4 million, or 35%, from the previous decade. Many women feel that a home-based business is a great opportunity since it is more flexible and allows a better balance between work demands and familial responsibilities. Additionally, home-based work can help create supporting income for their family through individual entrepreneurship (Thompson, Jones-Evans, & Kwong, 2009). Home-based female entrepreneurs may also share the work with their family members (Boris & Prügl, 1996).

Women are becoming entrepreneurs at a faster rate than men, and there has been a corresponding interest in studying the demographic profile of these women, to understand what motivates them to become home-based business owners, and what affects their economic success (Birley, 1998; Renzulli, Aldrich, & Moody, 2000; Warnecke, 2013). Despite this interest and the importance of studying such a large economic power bloc, limited scholarly research has been done in terms of female home-based business owners (Mould, Vorley, & Liu, 2014; Stevenson, 1990; Vorley & Rodgers, 2014). Zhang and Ning's (2011) study in China showed that small-scale home-based marketing could positively affect Chinese manufacturing industries and increase international exports. In addition, such home-based ventures could help develop and grow the urban economy.

Since 1990, millions of blogs have been established that discuss their authors' personal lives, business operations, and motivations, with a majority being established by women (Chen, 2012; Technorati, 2011). Many of these users also communicate with each other and share design and business ideas through the blogosphere (Chen, 2012). Blogs are a simple method of self-expression and sharing, and many bloggers have used their blogs as a method of social interaction (Hsu, 2012). Previous research into motivations for blogging have suggested mainly tangible benefits such as documenting the author's life, providing commentary and opinions, expressing deeply felt emotions, working out ideas through writing, and forming and maintaining interest-based communities and forums (Pedersen, 2010). Hence, blogs are a good method for obtaining personal information about the bloggers including their demographic profile.

The methodology used in this study is content analysis, a method that has been used in many other analyses of blogs, including *Analyzing Fashion Blogs: Further*

Avenues for Research (Mora & Rocamora, 2015), *Creativity and Sustainable Fashion Apparel Consumption: The Fashion Detox* (Ruppert-Stroescu, LeHew, Connell, & Armstrong, 2015) and *Brands, Community and Style--Exploring Linking Value in Fashion Blogging* (Pihl, 2014). Content analysis is used as a technique for making replicable and valid references from texts and meaningful substances to the contexts, and understanding the study phenomena (Krippendorff, 2004; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Content was collected from active, English-language blogs and analyzed to form a demographic profile of female textile-design bloggers. The demographic information that was collected includes age, nationality and ethnic identity, current place of residence, family status, educational background, occupation, and socioeconomic status.

1.2 Research Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research study is to discover the demographic profile for female home-based textile designers who are active in the blogging community that has grown around the use of CAD and POD technology. At this stage in the research, the demographic profile will be generally defined as any understanding about “who” the subject of the study is, including, but not limited to, their age, nationality and ethnic identity, current place of residence, family status, educational background, occupation, and socioeconomic status.

1.3 Research Significance

A study of the demographic profile of female textile-designer bloggers is important for many reasons. This study will benefit industry by encouraging more people to become textile designers by demonstrating the lifestyles of current designers. Additionally, since the sample group uses CAD, the companies that make CAD software

such as Adobe could use the findings to market directly to this new group of people that there has been little academic research on. POD companies such as SpoonFlower may also benefit by knowing more about current and potential customers. This study will also add to the scholarly research in these fields by closing the gap in the current literature on the topic, a gap that has yet to study female textile-design bloggers. An understanding of the demographic profile of this new group of users which have not been previously explored or examined will make more in-depth research possible.

1.4 Research Question

What is the demographic profile of female home-based textile-design bloggers?

1.5 Definition of Terms

Blog. Blog is a shorthand version of the word “web log”, a concept that was created by Jorn Barger in 1997. A person that creates and maintains a blog is referred to as a blogger. In 1999, the first blogging software was created, which used online programs to help individual bloggers create and manage their blogs (Bulleit, 2008).

Computer-Aided Design (CAD). The use of computers to create, modify, or optimize a design (Sarcar, Rao, & Narayan, 2008). Textile designs using CAD are usually made in Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Corel Draw, and Lectra Kaledo Print (Smith, 2013).

E- Commerce. E-Commerce refers to commerce, the act of buying and selling, on the internet. E-commerce takes place on an e-marketplace which is a website where buyers and sellers come together to exchange goods, services, and money (Turban, King, Lee, & Viehland, 2002).

Freelance. Freelancers work for themselves and may produce work for many

retailers and consumers without being classed as an employee. They are independent and not affiliated with any company or organization (Walter, 2013).

Home-Based Business (HBB). A business based out of the home. Home-based workers can either work for an outside employer, performing some or all their jobs at home, or they may also own their own business (Soldressen, Fiorito, & He, 1998).

In-House. In-house designers are employees of a company that typically work for that specific company exclusively (Soldressen et al., 1998).

Print-on-Demand (POD). Printing technology that allows individuals to produce textile products in small quantities, as they need them (Lewis, 2002). Print-on-demand also allows users to run many different designs in small quantities without committing to a single long-term design (Fraser, Ketteler, Rahn, & Hallengren, 2015).

1.6 Researcher Positioning

In this research study, the researcher embraced a transformative worldview which seeks to place central importance on the study of lives and experiences of people from diverse groups. In studying these diverse people, the participants frequently help design questions, collect data, and analyze information (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the participants are actively shaping the types of information that is available for study based on what they publish publicly on their blogs.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Textile Print Design

The first form of decorating and dyeing textiles originated in India, China, Japan, and Indonesia (Harris, 1993). An early form of printing was resist dyeing, where dye-resistant materials were applied to the fabric to prevent certain parts of the fabric from being exposed to the dye (Harris, 1993). Early textile designers in India and Japan used blocks, brushes, or stencils covered with resist to create patterns on fabric.

The rise of textile printing offered an easier and more flexible method of patterning fabrics. In block printing, a color paste is applied onto a carved block and then the block is stamped onto the fabrics. Each wooden block would have its own color. After one color layer dried, the next color was applied (Meller & Elffers, 1991).

Popular designs such as floral motifs were created using copper plate printing. Like “intaglio” printing methods, copper plate printing pressed etched plates filled with dye onto fabric to create an image (Harris, 1993).

The first machine that successfully printed fabric continually was used in 1783 (Kadolph, 2010). Known as direct roller printing, this method used engraved rollers, each transferring a different color. An engraved roller was carved with the pattern and each color had its own unique roller. The fabric to be printed was backed with a rubber blanket and a piece of unfinished fabric. Three layers are then pulled around a foam cylinder which moves and allows the fabric to circle the engraved rollers, thus printing the design on the fabric. The rubber blanket provides a solid surface for sharp printing, while the back fabric absorbs extra dye, making design patterns clearly defined (Koch & Nordmeyer, 2000).

Screen printing simplifies the printing process by using a sealed mesh screen to allow a paste dye to print on the exact area selected. Different types of screen printing methods have been used to print fabric, including flat screen printing and rotary screen printing. Commercial screens may print up to 32 colors (Ellis, 1985).

Flat screen printing is used for large fabric orders of 500 to 1,000 meters (Ellis, 1985). This method of printing can be done using hand or automated processes. Automatic flat screen printing pushes fabric along a conveyor belt as screens are lowered onto the fabric to create patterns. The fabric is then dried in ovens (Ellis, 1985). Rotary screen printing uses cylindrical screens to apply patterns. This method makes printing large pieces of fabric affordable (Kadolph, 2010). Discharge printing reverses the pattern-making process by removing color instead of adding it. The process uses a chemical discharge paste that is applied to the fabric in a specific pattern. The fabric is then steamed to create a white or different colored area where the discharge paste has been applied (Kadolph, 2010). The technological of CAD and POD processes are widely used in current textile manufacturing industries.

2.1.1 Computer-Aided Design.

The use of CAD benefits both designers and the textile industry by simplifying the design process and decreasing the cost of the products. CAD and other technological applications are essential parts of the design industry, especially textile design, because it solves current technical limitations (Treadaway, 2007). Using CAD systems to create textile design images is typically done using vector graphics that are converted into raster images. A vector is a virtual object based on quantity and direction that uses a mathematical method to design the shapes, starting with a point and then a line. It can

control the length and width of the shapes. Rasters are dot-matrix data structures where each pixel is a small square. Some examples of vector graphics programs that are readily available to consumers are Adobe Illustrator, Corel Draw, and AutoCAD (Smith, 2013). Raster graphics programs that are also readily available to consumers are Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Fireworks, and GIMP (Smith, 2013).

CAD technology is particularly useful for designing textile fabrics in a sophisticated way such as placement of color, motifs, or structure (Chapman & Little, 2012). It allows amateurs and professional to independently design and print fabrics. CAD also creates stylistic possibilities such as overlapping many layers and colors, as well as manipulating designs quickly through software programs (Bowles & Isaac, 2009). CAD technology has closed the gap between fashion designers and textile designers, and has allowed both types of designers to go around the model of mass production (Bowles & Isaac, 2009). Along with the rise of the Internet and the development of CAD, digital printing is pushing textiles and apparel production into a new era of "mass customization." Through digital printing, designers can produce customized designs at a low cost with reduced waste (Theodorou & Florou, 2008).

Using scanners and CAD technology, artists can reproduce photographic images onto fabric. Traditional decorative tools, such as handmade drawings or watercolors, can be scanned and digitized for use in a CAD software to create complex art on fabric. The use of hand drawings and painted images can create a depth of color and interesting looks on fabric (Burton, 2005). CAD technology also allows repeat and pattern to be used to enhance creativity of pattern placement in a garment (Briggs-Goode, 2013). Moreover,

for the textile industry, CAD can alter color, fabric and texture and design clothes to fit individual bodies (Nayak, Padhye, Wang, Chatterjee, & Gupta, 2015).

While CAD technology has become a tool through which designers express their creativity and imagination on textiles, the beauty of screen-print, stencil, and other traditional methods are still an important part of many cultures (Burton, 2005). Because of the attractiveness and high quality of traditional methods, designers try to imitate traditional looks through digital methods (Burton, 2005). In addition, many quilters use traditional techniques and mixed media to create their art quilts. They extend their creativities to design and print their fabrics digitally, including print-on-demand (Bowles & Isaac, 2012).

2.1.2 Inkjet Digital Textile Printing.

Digital printing technology is a topic that has been heavily discussed in the print media and has become popular in the print industry (Lewis, 2002; Tzouvaras & Hess, 2001). This technology can also help with the customization of prints that are used to create products that consumers are interested in (Larsson, 2004).

The transition from digital printing on paper to digital printing on textiles began in the year 1975. Milliken Fabrics of Spartanburg, South Carolina pushed digital printing into the textile arena with the Milliken and Co. inkjet system for printing onto carpets (Ujiie, 2006). Numerous companies were developing a variety of digital laser printing technologies by the 1980s, such as airbrush/valve jet, continuous inkjet and piezo inkjet. These methods are used on a variety of products, including automotive upholstery, athletic wear, banners, and apparel (Tyler, 2005). In addition, inkjet digital printing has helped evolve the textile and fashion industry (Joseph & Cie, 2009).

Digital printing eliminates the need for large batch printing that will be discarded at the end of the season (Bowles & Isaac, 2009). It also allows consumers to customize colors and designs to fit their tastes. Businesses are increasingly adopting some form of mass customization. Companies like Levi Strauss, Swimwear, Second Skin, and Custom Footwear already providing customers with the ability to customize their products (Nayak, Padhye, Wang, Chatterjee, & Gupta, 2015).

2.1.3 Print-on-Demand.

POD was developed more than twenty years ago to print images onto various substances such as paper, film, and plastic. In the previous ten years, POD has been used more extensively in textile applications because of improvements in ink, software, and machinery (Joseph & Cie, 2009). With digital printers, software guides the operation from beginning to end. Its two main functions are to put a drop of ink onto the substrate in the chosen place and to make sure that the correct color is produced. It does this by determining how the nozzle fires and the movement of the printer head. A normal printer needs more than one million instructions every second. Modern machines that include greyscale options require even more information to print (Smith, 2013). There are different colorants used in printers that are tailored for different purposes and for a variety of fabrics. Achieving the correct color for the final print requires choosing the appropriate type of colorant for the material. The four main types of colorant used in inkjet digital printing are reactive dyes, disperse dyes, acid dyes, and pigments (Tyler, 2005).

2.2 Textile Designers

Textile design is a field that includes fashion and products such as home decor,

furnishings, wallpaper, and gift wrap products (Russell, 2011). Although many designers are freelancers, some may contract with agencies that will sell their designs to a range of companies or clients nationally (Russell, 2011). Designers may produce commissioned designs for companies on a regular basis.

Designers may build up a portfolio of work, perhaps online, that is directly marketed to companies or to an agent (Wilson, 2001). Freelance designers may either work for independent studios or through an agent, producing designs on paper which will then be sold to mills and converters, with the agent or studio (if they have one) receiving a commission. The work contained in this portfolio may have a small reflection of current trends, but will mostly reflect the taste and style of the designer. While the designer may have some idea of what their consumer will be looking for, there will not be a specified customer waiting to buy such portfolio work upon completion (Wilson, 2001).

In-house print designers will usually be responsible for approving strike-offs, which are sample prints on fabric (Barto, 2014). These designers may prefer to work in-house for larger companies due benefits such as financial planning, health insurance, and retirement savings that are not available to freelancers (Barto, 2014). Another alternative for designers is to be a freelancer, which is like a contract worker. The designer would be considered a freelancer if they use their own tools and workplace. They also can manage their businesses and market their products and consumer services (Walter, 2013). Some textile designers choose to be freelancers for many reasons such as a flexible work schedule, the ability to work from home, free creativity, and being their own boss (Barto, 2014).

2.3 Blogging

A blogger is somebody that writes and maintains a blog, or web log (Bulleit, 2008). Currently, blogging is one of the ways in which cultural information and data is stored and presented (Bulleit, 2008). Day by day, blogging has changed mainstream culture and the ways that bloggers see themselves and the world around them.

Blogs are valuable because they increase the number of creative channels between designers and the world of the arts and artists (Budge, 2012). Blogs are a convenient and accessible method of displaying artwork by artists and designers, particularly young people (Findlay, 2015). They are also a tool for learning and expressing creativity for example mommy blogs, blogs about various parenting styles, and beauty vlogs, videos demonstrating beauty products and techniques, which have been traditionally considered to be feminine domains (Duffy & Hund, 2015). Online blogs provide interaction, conversation, and open discussion for bloggers individually and in groups. The internet and social media have allowed participants to share information and communicate with each other (Somolu, 2007). It is easy to publish a blog as a means of self-expression and to use it as a social space for interacting with others (Hsu, 2012).

People generally use blogs to document their personal lives, feelings, and opinions. They also may explain their ideas and organize communities around those ideas (Hsu, 2012). In addition, blogging is used for different activities which help connect people with important issues, varying in content from spontaneous writing of emotions to well thought-out community issues (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004). Far from being “text online” today, blogs may be a collection of various forms of media such as text, images, videos, and voice recordings, through which a personality is crafted and

communicated (Sinanan, Graham, & Jie, 2014).

2.3.1 Utility of Blogging.

Millions of blogs have been created since the year 1990 (Chen, 2012). Most bloggers are women who blog about their personal lives, feelings, and motivations. They also generally love to communicate with others on the blogging platform (Chen, 2012). Men generally use blogs more for informational purposes, whereas women are more interested in aesthetic issues and expressing themselves using a blog platform (Hsu, 2012). Female bloggers use blogs to show their creative writing and to display their own memories by expressing their emotions, opinions, daily lives, and events. Blogs also become a bonding tool which connects people to their family and friends (Pedersen, 2010). Many social and psychological factors motivate women to write blogs (Chen, 2012), such as self-disclosure and affiliation. Some blogs empower women to express their opinions more equally in less developed parts of the world as well as to give women an active voice in society, which helps further the cause of gender equality in some places (Somolu, 2007).

Authors may also use blogs to increase their income from home (Pedersen, 2010). In blogs, images are the commercial object for increasing income and marketing goods, both as advertisements as well as for increasing interest in the blog's subject in a non-textual way. Furthermore, blogs became an embedded of female culture, which reflects their social media friendships, connection to goods, and being entrepreneurial (Sinanan, Graham, and Jie, 2014).

Hellberg and Tönnesson's (2012) study on blog readers showed that the motivation for some women bloggers to publish their lives and experiences was to

receive comments, criticism, and feedback from the readers of blogs. The researcher believes that blogs help nurture young women and therefore affect the outcomes of their identities as well as who and what they may become in life. Blogs become meaningful for the bloggers and readers by telling the reader who the bloggers are on a personal level. By freely expressing themselves, the bloggers are pursuing their own sense of self and identity, which may be found to be pleasurable, amusing, and inspiring (Hellberg & Tönnesson, 2012). For example, young women in Singapore created blogs that expressed their lifestyles and culture through the aesthetic of content about Singaporean culture such as cloth, beauty products, and celebrations. These blogs became an embedded part of Singaporean women's culture (Sinanan et al., 2014).

2.3.2 Fashion Blogs.

Fashion blogs have become very popular, as determined by academic researchers (Duffy & Hund, 2015). Fashion blogs are characterized by authenticity, individualism, and independence from traditional fashion media (Marwick, 2013).

Fashion blogging is very commercially successful in terms of digital cultural production (Duffy & Hund, 2015). Many fashion companies associate themselves with blogs for the sake of marketing, such as displaying photos of the company's products and brands. Fashion companies may also provide free samples and gifts to bloggers who will review their products and effectively use product placement in their blogs (Hellberg & Tönnesson, 2012). Blogs, as well as other social media platforms, are a way for customers to react to new products and express their emotions and opinions and share trends towards fashion products. Such sharing through social media by consumers becomes a powerful tool for many companies and designers (Findlay, 2015).

In 2006, collectively all fashion bloggers were named the most influential “media person,” proving that the rise of blogs has overtaken the influence of traditional print media such as magazines in terms of advertising to their followers. Bloggers hold influential power over their readers, a power that can be used to alter sales and emotions about brands, trends, and specific garments. When the blogs’ followers comment on and support their blogs, it demonstrates that the bloggers’ designs are beneficial, helping them further develop their designs by incorporating readers’ feedback (Hellberg & Tönnesson, 2012). Many fashion bloggers use blogs for self-expression by discussing their knowledge and experiences in fashion. They create something called a “fashionable persona,” a phrase that is created by fashion bloggers where they exhibit their products, feelings, daily views, experiences, as well as text in their photos (Titton, 2015).

2.3.3 Quilting Blogs.

Quilters have moved their crafts online by developing complex networks and communities through their blogs and various social media sites such as Flickr, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter (Haak, 2014). Crafters are people involved in the crafting subculture and share their crafts, such as quilting and knitting (Rushman, 2012). Digital technology and networking are essential tools in the hobby quilting market. Hobbyists create their blogs and websites to express the value of quilting and to spread information about quilting as well as teaching people how to quilt. Creativity, emotion, and passion are ways that quilt bloggers invest their experiences and skills through blogs and web pages (Gainor, 2011). Additionally, it gives the member the freedom to be anonymous or to participate with others and build their own portfolio (Haak, 2009).

2.4 Home-Based Business Model

A study conducted by MBO Partners (2013) referenced that the number of freelancers in the United States increased dramatically compared to the previous two years, with a difference of more than 10%. This helps explain a recent forecast that in 2020, the workforce will shift to most workers being independent workers (Pofeldt, 2015). The number of home-workers in China has expanded, stimulating the Chinese economy by growing exports of craft goods (Zhang & Ning, 2011).

In India, a study showed that small businesses recently increased as a result of women engaging in home-based businesses (Bertaux & Crable, 2007). Home-based businesses do not need a lot of start-up funds and are a good opportunity for women with low budgets and limited work hours. Home-based businesses are good opportunities for women who need extra income to help out the family, since they are often more flexible and balanced than regular jobs (Thompson et al., 2009). Additionally, this work is attractive for women who have small children or disabled family members to care for, or those who live in rural areas (Edwards & Field-Hendrey, 2002).

2.4.1 Values of Home-Based Businesses.

A study by Vorley and Rodgers (2014) found that motivations of the owners of home-based businesses (HBBs) were complex in terms of their personal and professional lives, with the motivations being cost-effectiveness and flexibility in work hours that allows a balance between work and lifestyle. Even though in-house employment with a company is more financially secure for women, many still choose small business ownership to balance their domestic responsibilities and family, as well as to increase their family income (Walker, Wang, & Redmond, 2008). HBB ownership may also be

motivated by a desire to engage in economic activities and owning a business in certain countries where women are generally discouraged from doing so. For example, a study conducted in Palestine found that female embroiderers work independently from home to help with family income and maintaining their family culture (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2010).

Having an interest in the work is one of the main motivations for American women to work independently from home. Although freelance work may bring in less income than contract work, many freelancers often enjoy their work more and life satisfaction was a largely positive influence from women, along with creativity and enjoyment (Bastow-Shoop, Leistritz, Ekstrom, & Zetocha, 1990; Carter, Van Auken, & Harms, 1992). People who start artistic businesses are more likely to cite their love of the work rather than business skills as their primary motivation (Littrell, Stout, & Reilly, 1991; Soldressen et al., 1998).

2.4.1 Home-Based Female Designers.

Home-based businesses run by women are mostly focused on crafts and artisan products (Walker & Webster, 2004). Home-based textile artists fill a niche in the marketplace for personal products and services that cannot be provided through traditional production and marketing methods (Luckman, 2013; Pusey, 1990). Hobbyist skills such as sewing, photography, or catering can be used to start a home-based business in ways that would not be feasible for a large business (Soldressen et al., 1998). Textile artists often provide specially customized services such as quilting, embroidery, dyeing and printing, dressmaking, knitting, crocheting, weaving, and lace-making to smaller markets than traditional textile companies (Littrell et al., 1991; Luckman, 2013;

Smith, 2013; Soldressen et al., 1998). These customized services are made easier with CAD and POD technologies that allow designers to produce their own design and products. Customized services that use CAD and POD are frequently sold online since they can be quickly produced and shipped to consumers.

2.5 E-commerce

Certain technologies such as online payment methods, website builders, and digital photography have made it easier for women engaged in textile-based work to create their own stores and businesses (Chansky, 2010). As digital technology grows, the home-based business model will also grow (Edwards & Field-Hendrey, 2002). Currently, artists and crafters have used e-commerce websites to conduct their small business affairs, which can impact knowledge of the business and how sharing this technology with others is so important to achieving success (Kuhn & Galloway, 2015). In addition, some companies earn profit by creating sites and services that customers can use easily and comfortably (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). These services help designers and costumers to develop their design and products. For example, at the Ponoko Company, www.ponoko.com, consumers can design custom virtual products using software such as CAD. They can create designs based on their individual inspiration or download them via the company site. This company can print a copy of the design onto final products available for sale (Seran & Izvercian, 2014).

Nowadays, the connection among sellers and consumers has become more accessible using modern technologies such social media. The social media websites such as Facebook and Instagram allow designers to connect with unknown people to sell their products (Seran & Izvercian, 2014). Some companies such as the marketplace of

Spoonflower, Inc. (2008) have adopted digital textile printing to print fabric on demand. Spoonflower's (2008) design functions allows designers to create their own designs and provides them with software so they can upload their designs to be printed digitally on the fabrics that consumers can choose.

Furthermore, E-commerce can help women develop their small businesses (Surangi, 2016). Some e-commerce websites, such as Etsy, have increased in popularity, and women make around 79% of crafts listed (Matchar, 2013). However, while Etsy has provided some success for specialized artisans, income is highly stratified, making it an unsuitable option for most home-based entrepreneurs (Shorey, 2014).

2.6 Summary of Literature Review

The literature review demonstrates the importance of this unique group of female home-based textile designers. More women are becoming entrepreneurs now than ever, and some statistics show them leading men in entrepreneurial activity. The literature review also demonstrates that technology such as CAD, POD, and e-commerce is replacing or improving upon traditional textile design and production methods. CAD has revolutionized the way textile designers work and has opened the option for designers to work from home. Blogs have also been discussed as a medium for designers to discuss their designs and ideas, along with conversing emotional issues. By using their blogs to market products, these bloggers also use e-commerce websites to facilitate the sales. The researcher will analyze the demographic profile of female home-based textile designers

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is any technique for making inferences by systematically identifying the characteristics of messages, for example, finding trends and patterns in documents such as blogs (Holsti, 1969; Stemler, 2001). The inferences found using content analysis help compress large amounts of texts into a few categories based on explicit rules of coding, which is breaking down information into broad categories of data (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980; Weber, 1990). Content analysis is a flexible method of analysis because it describes a large collection of approaches ranging from quantitative to qualitative, and inductive to deductive (Cavanagh, 1997; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Rosengren, 1981). This research will take a qualitative approach to content analysis. As a research method, qualitative content analysis provides a systematic method for describing data (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Schreier, 2012). Qualitative content analysis focuses on creating an overall picture of a phenomenon that is within context (White & Marsh, 2006).

Numerous researchers have utilized the qualitative content analysis method, with the number of studies using it growing from 97 in 1991 to 601 in 2002 (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). One body of research that has used the content analysis method is that of Shim, Santos, and Choi (2013). Their research used a mixed-method approach to the study, but focused on qualitative content analysis in the analysis of blog posts to obtain more detailed information than their quantitative survey results. Another study using the content analysis method is that of Sinanan et al. (2014). The researchers used the content analysis method to examine Singaporean women's blogs for information on the

demographic profile of the authors. Also, previous studies using this method have found that blog posts helped the researcher understand the mindset of participants better than simple surveys (Pihl, 2014; Ruppert-Stroescu, et al., 2015). These studies set precedents for finding qualitative data and making thoughtful conclusions about such data from blogs.

This study focuses on conventional qualitative content analysis. This method is generally appropriate when existing theory or research literature on a topic is limited (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Researchers avoid using preconceived categories, and instead allow the categories to develop from the data (Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002).

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

In this qualitative study, the data is collected using public documents (blogs) (Creswell, 2012). Blogs are often one of the easiest method for accessing personal information of bloggers' experiences, feelings, and thoughts. Blogs have the advantage of being easy and cost-efficient to self-publish on the Internet, which offers more opportunity to interact with other people (Herring, Scheidt, Wright, & Bonus, 2005). This study will collect blogs from female home-based textile designers who use CAD and POD by examining content from their blogs.

A purposeful sampling method was used, and blogs to include in the sample group were identified by the sampling criteria; female textile designers, aged 19 or above, that design textiles from home using CAD and POD, sell their designs in an online marketplace, and maintain an active (2014-2016) English-language blog about textile design. These criteria define the sampling which will ensure a correct understanding of the study's phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Blogs were identified and collected by

searching key words and phrases such as “textile-design blogger”, “textile graphic design blogger”, and “digital textile-design blogger” on websites such as Google, Google+, Blogspot, LiveJournal, and Tumblr. Online marketplaces and e-commerce sites such as Etsy and Spoonflower’s Marketplace were also used as a resource for finding linked blogs. Some blogs also linked to others, which were included in the preliminary sample gathering stage if they met the criteria (Krippendorff, 2004).

Demographic information such as age, nationality and ethnic identity, current place of residence, family status, educational background, occupation, and socioeconomic status was gathered from blog posts. Individual blogs and blog posts were collected and analyzed until saturation was reached.

3.3 Data Analysis

Blog content was analyzed using three rounds of coding and constant comparison (Dey, 1993). The blog posts were analyzed by using Creswell’s (2014) steps of analyzing qualitative data, which are making general reflections on the overall meaning of the data, coding the data into meaningful segments that are labeled by the researcher, combining the coding segments into broader themes, and then making thoughtful comparisons between the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; White & Marsh, 2006). The qualitative data analysis program MAXQDA 11 (VERBI GmbH, 2014) was used to analyze the data in the current study.

When the category topics in the blog posts had been discovered, the topics were organized along with textual sources into a list of codes which were reduced by grouping related topics together and showing interrelationships between codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Analysis and categorization of new blogs continued until saturation was achieved.

When the researcher discovers no new patterns, it is presumed that all the relevant patterns have been discovered and that additional work will only confirm such findings (White & Marsh, 2006).

Qualitative analysis reduced the findings into numbers and percentages that were represented in tables and charts that demonstrate the relationship between the data (White & Marsh, 2006). The findings included the voice of participants from quotations, which are important in indicating the trustworthiness of the study (Polit & Beck, 2012; Sandelowski, 1995).

Reliability in qualitative research refers to the stability of responses to multiple coders of data (Silverman, 2005). Reliability for the current study was ensured via an inter-coder agreement where two coders analyzed the blogs. A friend of the researcher that was introduced to the study; informally trained in content analysis and use of the MAXQDA software program was invited to code the same blogs independently, and the codes from both coders were compared to ensure reliability (Krippendorff, 2004; Peter & Lauf, 2002). The inter-coder reliability of the current study is 89.57%.

The validity in a qualitative research study can be reached in different strategies. One of the strategies is through peer review or debriefing, as it provides an external check of the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the current study, the researcher received guidance from a research methodology expert and mixed methods consultant at the University of Nebraska's NEAR Center. The consultant reviewed the data collection and data analysis procedures to ensure the correct designers and blogs were selected, and that the categories and subcategories met the goals of the study.




CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

30 textile blogs were analyzed, at which point saturation was achieved, with a total of 138 blog posts that were used to generate seven demographic categories. These categories were derived from various linguistic features such as single words, sentences, and paragraphs that identified the demographic profile of the designers included in this sample. The categories are age, national origin and ethnic identity, current place of residence, family status, educational background, occupation, and socioeconomic status.

4.1 Age

One of the criteria that were looked at was age. The researcher concluded that the designers' ages were above 19 years old by identifying the personal photos posted in the designers' blogs and the use of their children's ages. As seen in Table 4.1: Sample of Designer's Photos, the designer's appear to be above the age of 19.

Table 4.1: Sample of Designer's Photos. (Lane, 2012; Lynch, 2012; Wittingslow, 2008)

Designer Name	Designer's Photo
Designer A	
Designer B	
Designer C	

One designer mentioned indirectly about her daughters' generation between 60s and 70s by posting, "I used to make for my daughters when they were

little, back in the late '60s and '70s.” Other posted directly her daughter’s age writing, “Our little girl is 21 today”.. However, the majority (n=28) of the 30 designers did not mention their age in their blogs, with only two designers that referenced their ages in passing. One designer mentioned her age directly with following statement, “I really don’t feel like I’m turning 40”. The other was less direct with her age, posting that she “literally turn[s] into a 15-year-old (I’m 48) when I meet artists who have totally inspired me!”

4.2 National Origin and Ethnic Identity

In this section, the researcher combined between nationality and ethnicity, as it was unclear when designers were differentiating between the two. When speaking about national origin, some designers (n=7) were more explicit than others, with one remarking that, “I grew up in Northern California, the San Francisco Bay Area.” Another designer wrote that she was, “Originally from England.” As seen in Figure 4.2: National Origin of Designers, designers who mentioned nationality were primarily from the United Kingdom, and the United States.

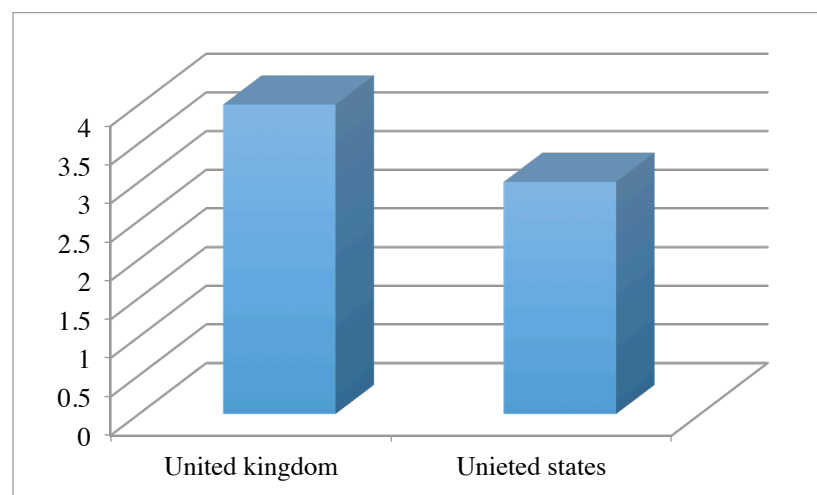


Figure 4.1: National Origin of Designers.

More designers (n=6) mentioned about their ethnic identity without specifying if they are from the place in question such as the designer that noted, “I am Irish...but I know a lot of people who are Irish for the day.” It is unclear if this person is from Ireland, currently lives in Ireland, has Irish heritage, or simply identifies as an Irish. Additionally, it is also unclear if this Irish-ness comes from Northern Ireland, part of the United Kingdom, or from the Republic of Ireland, a sovereign state. Another designer talked about having “a normal Dutch home” which could either indicate that she currently lives in the Netherlands, is from the Netherlands, that her family is Dutch, or that she identifies with the Netherlands and has modeled her home after its culture. Finally, one designer made a vague reference about missing her family from the “Heart of the Country” and then asking, “Who’s noticed that Canada’s Capital is shaped like a heart?” As seen in Figure 4.2: Implicit Ethnic Identity of Designers, such as British, American, Irish, Dutch, Canadian and German.

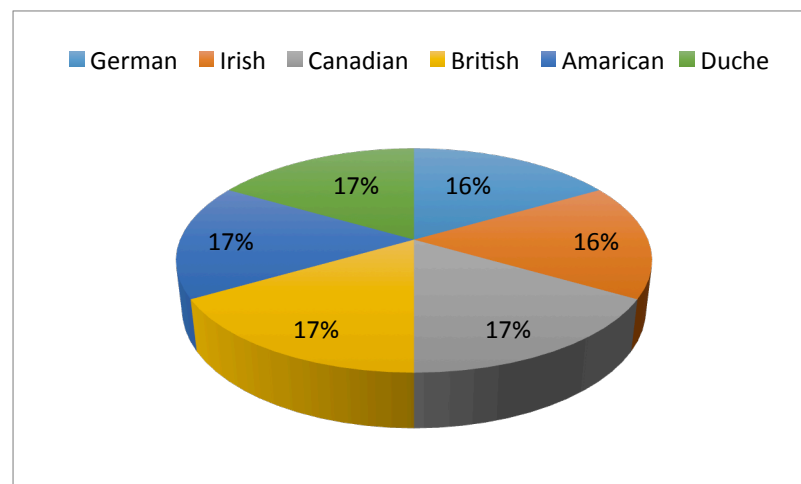


Figure 4.2: Implicit Ethnic Identity of Designers

4.3 Current Place of Residence

In addition to nationality and ethnic identity, many designers (n=20) spoke about their current place of residence. As seen in figure 4.3: Place of Current Residence, most of the designers are living in the United States, with over a third (n=11) that mention currently residing here. The United Kingdom comes in second (n=7), and Australia rounds out the locations (n=2). One of the designers that identifies as English wrote about how living in Wales as “provide[d] me with a multitude of inspirational images.” Another designer, in addition to identifying herself as Irish, hinted at her current location within the United States by writing about 4th of July celebrations with the following imagery, “USA flag, mid air, fireworks, fir crackers, a young girl with stars, and a yellow cat”.

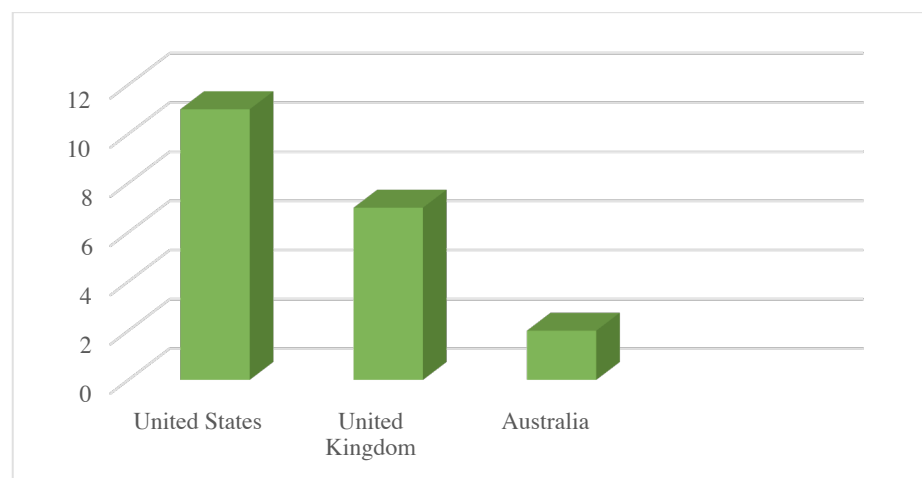


Figure 4.3: Current Place of Residence.

4.4 Family Status

As seen in figure 4.4: Family Status, a majority (n=18) of designers discussed family status such as having children (n=18) and/or being married (n=13). Not all the designers that talked about having children mentioned if they were married or not, so

there may be more that are married than is reported.

4.4.1 Marital Status.

Nearly half (n=13) of designers mentioned that they are married. One designer wrote that she and her husband have toured the place where she taught art and design workshops, mentioning that, “My husband and I jumped on a hop on hop off bus for a city tour.” Other designers mentioned that their husbands are very supportive of their work and encourage them. One designer noted that, “My family, especially my husband, have always been very supportive towards my creative.” Another wrote that, “I actually paint in my garage, it’s always a big mess but my husband doesn’t mind at all.” A third designer mentioned that, “I am so lucky to have a super supportive husband.” Some designers have not discussed their marital status in their blogs. Instead, they talked extendedly about some of their families’ members. One mentioned, “The good thing is that we (me, my sister, niece and nephew) will be moving only a few miles from where we currently are and can take our time preparing.” Another described her projects that she is busy with and that she missed blogging, “wow, it has been a while since I posted any fabric photos! The holiday and my major crafting projects have taken me away from blogging. There have been probably seven or eight rice socks for various family members, a small zippered pouch for Grandma, a clutch for my friend Diana, another clutch for Mom, a suede wallet for my brother, and some embroidery for my Aunt Jennifer. I didn’t manage to photograph any these projects, but I always want to give people their presents as soon as they’re complete. lol.”

4.4.2 Parental status.

In terms of children, most designers (n=19) discussed having children, ranging from one to five each. However, three of the designers mentioned having children without specifying how many, so the range of children may be different. One designer sewed garments for her children made with fabric she had designed and discussed that her daughters were happy to model the dress that she had made for them with, “these 2 cute sisters were happy to show off their new alpaca and dots dresses with matching reversible vests! Sewn by mommy of course...with her own designed fabrics”. Work-life balance was another topic discussed with parental status. One designer wrote, “my working hours start after dropping my daughter at school.” Another posted, “When the girls are in bed I get to sit down and work in peace for a few hours!” Some designers mentioned their kids by discussing how their kids had inspired them. One designer, being inspired by her son, created a birthday party invitation as seen in figure 4.4.2: Inspired Birthday Party Invitation.



Figure 4.4: Inspired Birthday Party Invitation (Van de Leijgraaf, 2015).

4.5 Educational Background

The education background category includes sub-categories such as formal education, and informal education. Formal education here refers to having a degree awarded by a college or university. Informal education indicates to education that includes informal sources such as open online-courses, tutorials, and in-person sources such as books, camps, and classes that are not affiliated with a college or university.

4.5.1 Formal Education.

As seen in figure 4.5: Educational Background, there were few (n=5) instances of designers discussing their formal education in the field of art or design with at least a bachelor's degree. Some designers received a degree in textile design (n=2), while others had other type of art degrees such Communications or Graphic Design. One designer explained her education background by writing, "Early on it was clear I would be going to art school. I ended up at Rhode Island School of Design where I majored in textile design." Another posted, "I studied Textile Design at University in the UK." One designer graduated from a liberal arts education and she had an opportunity to be involved in a graphic design degree, "I did a BA in Communications" and "I then continued my studies through a degree in graphic Design..."

4.5.2 Informal Education.

Informal education may include classes that are offered by educational institute (in person or online) that are not part of formal degree by university or college, and online classes that are self-paced, and non-assisted personal learning through trial and error. Eight designers (26%) indicated that they received informal education in art or design. One designer mentioned taking a CAD class to learn Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator.

She wrote, “Pattern Camp [an online resource] which is like a 2-day boot camp for Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. I’m strengthening my Illustrator skills and have already learned a ton which will be put to use right away.”

One designer wrote that she likes designing and that she obtained knowledge about designing products that are sellable She posted, “Plus I liked it! I’ve learned from the MATS (Mart Art That Sells) classes that I’ve taken from Lilla Rogers over the past year and a half that I should be designing something that I would buy!”

Moreover, some designers take online classes and describe their experiences in their blogs while simultaneously encouraging their readers to enroll in their favorite online classes. One designer wrote in her blog,

“I am also taking an online painting class.... from Tim Sally called ‘Permission to play’. I think it is important to learn and grow.... online classes are so fun and convenient. If you have never tried one...I encourage you to find one (an artist you love or designer) and plunge into it! The classes are usually inexpensive and affordable. Lots of artists have created these classes and they share their knowledge and techniques.”

Another designer described self-learning CAD and how she learned from her mistakes and that it finally became easy for her. She wrote, “Last year I set myself the goal of learning to create border patterns in Photoshop, complete with ‘corners’ because I love patterned borders! And with a bit of trial and error, I finally found a way to do it that was not complicated.” Only one designer specifically mentioned having both formal and informal education. She began practicing design informally by herself, which led her to seek a degree in design, explaining, “I began as a self taught graphic designer, then I

decided to do a degree in Illustration.”

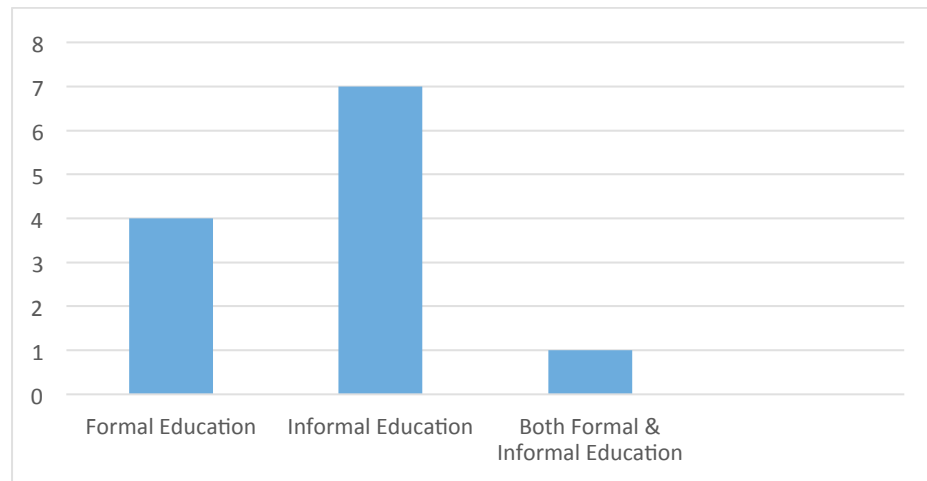


Figure 4.5: Educational Background.

4.6 Occupation

In this area, the content analysis for textile-design bloggers showed the different types of professions that some of the designers have including design HBBs as well as additional employment. As seen in Figure 4.6: Occupation of Designers, most of the designers (n=27) mentioned owning an online shop relating to their HBB. Nine designers mentioned employment other than an HBB. One designer teaches at a high school, two have non-specified jobs, and the fourth is a professional artist. The designer that teaches high school did not mention what subject she is teaching, “Today, Monday, I went to North Leamington High School to start my teaching experience.” One designer did not directly state what her job is, saying, “all while working a day job that me working more hours than I ever signed” without further explanation as to what her job is. The full-time designer posted directly about her work, “Being a full time professional artist.” A number of designers (n=6) stated that were teachers of art and design online.

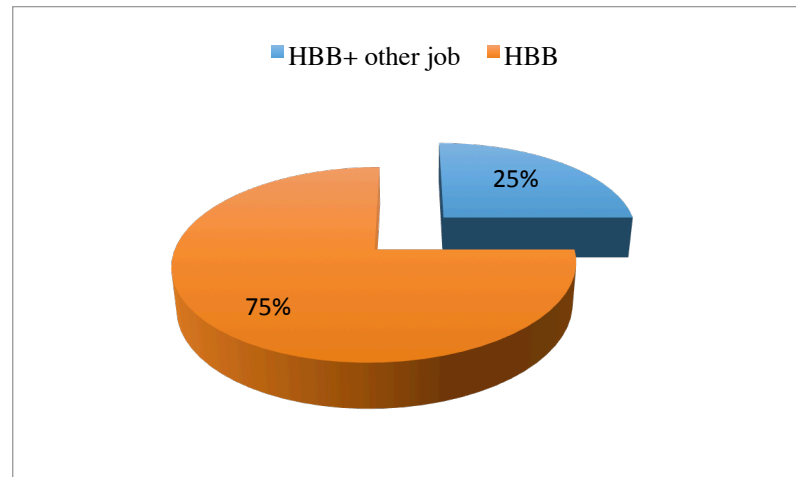


Figure 4.6: Occupation

4.7 Home-Based Businesses

Few ($n=3$) of the designers spoke about working from home to earn extra money for living. One designer described money earned from an HBB as a “bonus”, while another specified that she opened an e-commerce store to “help bring in income.”

One designer was much more explicit about the need for income when her and her friend began to work at home, writing, “We both decided to help bring in income with designing/crafting/work from home. I want to jump to her Etsy shop called Stuff and Things & co.”

Half ($n=15$) of the designers that have an Etsy shop in addition to their online shop in their blogs. One designer wrote, “I am very happy to finally have my first downloadable coloring image up on my etsy shop.” Another posted, “I am also selling some of my own pieces in my etsy shop.” One designer discussed closing her private shop and switching to Etsy with, “... the one I had for 8 years before I closed it and switched over to Etsy last year.”

A quarter ($n=7$) of designers sell their products at both digital and traditional

marketplaces. They sell their products such as fabrics, crafts, quilts, paintings, and home décor in fairs, booths, and gallery. One designer noted that she is “at the Spokane fairgrounds! I have my same corner spot!” Another designer noted that “it is that time of the year again when us Artists and craftspeople go all out to sell our wares, and promote a ‘handmade’ Christmas. For a number of reasons, I have only signed up to do one fair, a Maker’s Market at the Minories in Colchester. I sell my work in the gallery shop ...”

4.7.1 HBB with Informal Teaching.

Informal teaching will refer to teaching digital design, arts, quilting, and/or sewing in an informal environment such as online classes that are not affiliated with a college or university, local community lessons, and tutorials. One of the designers described that frequently teaches craft and artwork workshops noted that she is “lov[ing] my life as an artist and art teacher.” Another designer was creating educational DVDs for people that were interested in CAD, writing, “I teach you how to create these types of images in Photoshop Elements 10. You can still purchase this workshop in digital download or DVD from Interweave.” One designer was invited to be a part of a company’s website to make tutorials and spoke about teaching sewing with, “Today the Sewing Party went lives after weeks of work on their part and the small blogging group I am part of. The website has a blog that will feature tutorials, projects, and stories all about sewing.” A different designer made a digital class and invited her readers that are interested in CAD design to purchase her online course and join her, writing, “new Skillshare class, Make Digital Brushes from traditional art materials using your phone. I’d love you to join me and enroll using these links.”

4.7.2 Blogs for Promotion and Marketing.

Many (n=21) designers post about their designs and artwork in terms of promotion and marketing. One designer wrote, “SOCIETY 6 is having a great promotion of \$5 off things in my shop AND FREE worldwide shipping!! Use this link...” A different designer posted,

“At last, I’ve added my gift tag set to my Etsy shop. Also, everything ships free all month. Just use the coupon code SHIPIT at checkout. Don’t forget! That’s just for domestic. But if you’re an international customer, hit the custom order button and ask me for 40% off your shipping charges.”

One designer promoted her doll patterns by posting a link to her Etsy shop in her blog and writing, “You can purchase my original Boy Doll pattern or any of my other patterns from Etsy by clicking here.”

4.7.3 Customization of Products.

Some designers make their products easy to purchase and customize. One designer encouraged her clients to buy her designs by contacting her for any requests such as customizing fabrics. She posted,

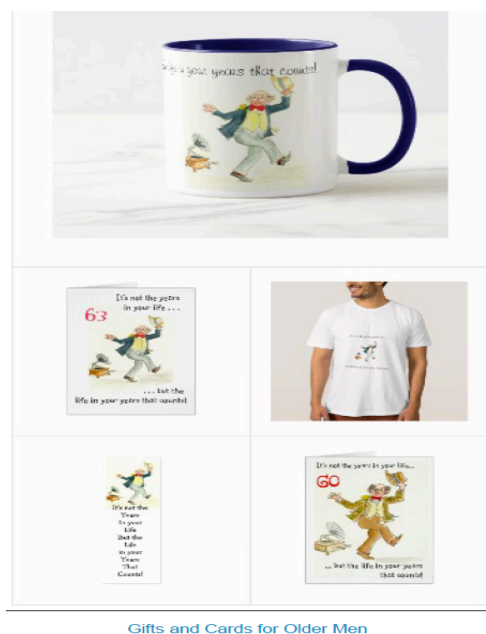
“Please note that for all of my Society 6 designs, as well as my Spoonflower fabric designs, always happy to customize colors. If you see something you like but need different colors please don’t hesitate to ask. I am happy to make custom color adjustments!”

One designer made different options for her costumers by writing, “ I have left the designs customizable. There are literally hundreds of options for you!” Another designer promotes her products to customers by making it easy for them to personalize. She

posted,

“The ethnic and tribal patterns in subtle colors are from my ‘Jungle Drums’ collections and many of them are ready for you to personalize. All can be easily customized by changing the scale direction of the pattern for a truly personal touch.”

She also has displayed her collection in her blogs and posted the following:



Gifts and Cards for Older Men

Here you'll find more than eighty trendy coffee mugs, specially designed to appeal to men. Coffee mugs with stripes, chevrons and plaid patterns (amongst others!), many of them ready to personalize with your name. Excellent, modestly priced gift for the man who has everything - except his own, personalized coffee mug!

Figure 4.7: Customization of products (Adamson, 2016).

4.8 Socioeconomic Status

None of the designers directly posted about their income status. There are slightly more than a third of the sample (n=12) posted indirectly about their socioeconomic status such as owning property and traveling for vacations.

One designer discussed adjusting her financial life while working as an artist and teacher. She wrote,

“you know we made lots of economic adjustments, downsized our house, etc, to make it work. And remarkably, it has worked. Or rather, I have worked! And I love my life an artist and art teacher. So...to think that I can support myself and my husband, on fabric created from my original watercolors!” Additionally, she explained how she can buy a new car and make a full payment, saying, “A little over a year and a half of buying my new car, I paid it off completely.

A different designer described her decreased socioeconomic status by writing that,

“it also doesn’t help that I’ve gone from earning money to not earning very much at all and a panic sets in when you need to pay for care repairs (£320) then car insurance for the year (£250).”

There are some indirect statements about the designers’ socioeconomic status. One wrote, “I will be gearing up to make my next move to a new location! I’m purchasing a house”. Additionally, there is a designer who loves to collect things during her trips and vacation, writing “during our holiday trips and our travels to Central, South America and Australia to visit family.” These statements indicate a higher socioeconomic status because of the large purchases and international travel. Other designers indirectly mentioned lower socioeconomic status such as not being able to afford an expensive CAD package such as Adobe, relying instead on free trials and short-term leases of the software to make their designs,

“I’m still part way through the free trial so have me to play around a bit more (sic). I’m undecided yet as to whether I would take up the monthly paid subscription. I

had never really used Illustrator before; partly because the high price has put me off using it in the past. Although it is still quite an expensive program, now Adobe have all their programs in the Creative Cloud if a project comes along that I really need it for it's good to know I could just subscribe for the month I need it..."

In contrast, one designer in Figure 4.9: Design Tools, posted an image of her design tools; an iPad and the Adobe Creative Suite.

Bit of Adobe Sketching to finish off the day.

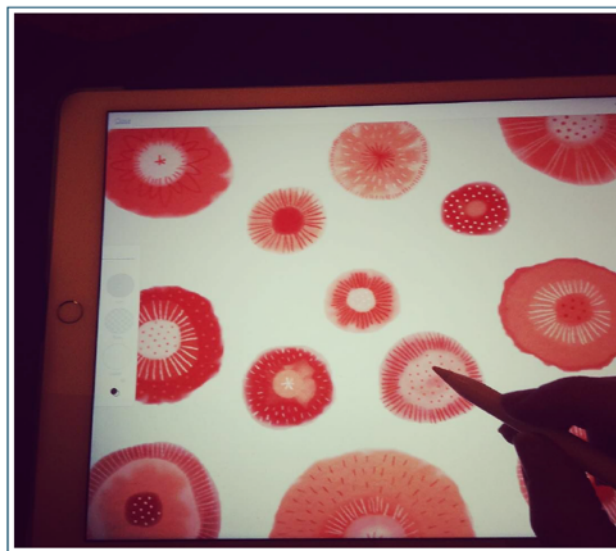


Figure 4.8: Design Tools (Squirrell, 2016).

These types of statements and photos indicate the socioeconomic status of designers by demonstrating what they can and cannot afford to purchase and what type of lifestyle they can support.

4.8.1 Crowdsourcing to Increase Income.

Crowdsourcing is “the practice of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people and especially from the online community rather than from traditional employees or suppliers” (Merriam-Webster, 2017). Crowdsourcing can provide supplemental income in addition to selling designs

and products. One method for crowdsourcing money is through Patreon, a subscription service where “patrons” can financially support a project or other cause by making monthly subscription payments of their choice amount. One designer was using Patreon in addition to a crowdsourcing “tip jar”. She posted several times in her blog that, “I have been busy on Patreon trying to earn enough to pay bills.” Additionally, she went on to encourage her readers to donate in other ways such as,

“Other ways you can support me: I made a wish list of some of my most wanted items right now, from the everyday stuff to crazy things like a fancy vacuum. If you want to toss money at me for whatever reason, you can use Square or PayPal.”

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The major question that is explored in this study was what is the demographic profile of female home-based business textile-design bloggers? This study aimed to analyze the demographic profile of these designers and derive quantitative frames from qualitative content analysis of designers' blogs. From analyzing the textile designers' blogs, seven categories emerged that structure the demographic profile for female textile-design bloggers.

5.1 Age

The majority of designers included in the sample did not discuss their age. It may be private information that they do not want to post in their blogs. There are only two designers that mentioned their ages as being between 40-50 years old.

5.2 National Origins, Ethnic Identity, and Current Residence

The researcher found that most of the designers are from English-speaking countries such as the USA, the UK, and Australia. This is logical because only English-language blogs were collected. If the initial sampling criteria were expanded to include blogs published in other languages more countries may have been represented. Among the English-speaking countries, the United States is the best represented in this study. One possible reason for this is because the United States is a more populous country than the others, as well as the fact that many people immigrate to the United States. It has been seen from blogs that some designers mentioned their nationalities in their blogs. There are some designers that were originally from other countries but that moved to the United States. This may be one possible explanation for the increase of independent workers in the United States. A study conducted in 2013 referenced that the number of

freelancers in the United States increased dramatically compared to the previous two years, with a difference of more than 10% (MBO Partners, 2013). According to the United States Census Bureau (2010), foreign-born immigration to the United States is a large component of international migration. Although correlation is not the same causation, these two figures may be somewhat interwoven.

According to the United Nations Department of Social Economics and Affairs, Population Division, the USA becomes internationally the largest country hosted immigrants between 2000-2015. President Hubert Humphrey (1965-1969) said, “an America all the richer for the many different and distinctive stander from which it is woven (Arana, 2009).”

5.3 Family Status

Findings show that designers were more likely to discuss parental status than martial status. Designers that are married reported that their spouses are supportive of their textile design careers which may indicate that their spouses understand what the designers are doing and believe that they will be successful or happy doing it.

Female designers use their blogs display memories, and emotions regarding their family, daily lives, and events which make blogging a bonding tool that connects people together (Pedersen, 2010). This claim is mirrored in the current study where the findings show that the designers frequently discussed their children and shared emotions about what was happening in their daily lives.

Roughly half of the designers were either married and/or had children. This may explain why many of them are seeking supplemental income to support their families. Many of the designers that had children posted frequently about their children and

explained that their children inspired them.

5.4 Educational Background

Findings show that while some designers had formal education in fields related to their HBBs, informal education had a dominant presence on blog posts. One explanation for this could be because they are designing for personal enjoyment and do not feel the need to show credentials such as a degree as one would if applying for a job.

5.4.1 Internet-based Informal Education.

The internet has made the textile design field more open to new designers because of an abundance of courses and other learning materials available online. Informal education classes in arts and designs are great opportunities to get one's foot in the door without committing to a long education in a formal setting. Online informal education is cost-effective and easy to obtain from home. This encourages people that are interested in textile design to begin learning about the industry from home, which may lead to more HBBs as the new designers will already be accustomed to designing from home.

The Internet has made the textile design career more readily available to more people because of the courses and other learning that can take place online such as informal education resources. Informal education class in design and arts is also a great opportunity especially through open online courses and tutorials. It is cost-effective and easy to take such from home.

5.5 Home-Based Businesses Design

Findings show that most of the designers own HBBs. This helps explain a recent forecast that in 2020, the workforce will shift to most workers being independent workers (Pofeldt, 2015). HBBs are a great way to start a business because there are limited start-

up funds, freedom in the workplace, and the owner gets to do their passion for a living (Thompson, et al., 2009). Using free versions of CAD software and the Internet, the initial cost-of-entry to the online textile design marketplace is relatively low.

5.5.1 The Values of Blogs as Tools.

Designers market and promote products to blog readers and potential buyers using their blogs by posting images of completed work (Sinnam, Graham, and Jie, 2014). Textile designers included in the sample group used blogs as a marketing and promotional tool to reach customers. This included promoting new items, offering customization services, and receiving feedback from potential customers. Such marketing through social media such as blogs by consumers becomes a powerful tool for many designers (Findlay, 2015).

5.5.2 Customizing Design Products.

The findings show that many designers help their customers personalize products. They provide designs in different colors, scale, and fabrics. In addition to providing customized products, the designers educated their readers and potential customers about customization. One possible explanation for this is that the designers think that teaching customers about customization and helping them customize products will increase sales due to a product being more personal for the customer. Another possible explanation is that the designer enjoys the challenge of customizing products for various tastes. It is much easier to customize products with current technologies like CAD and POD than it was in the past. These are technological advancements that have been helping home-based female designers simplify their workload (Bowles & Isaac, 2009; Ujiie, 2006).

5.6 Socioeconomic Status

While none of the designers explicitly discussed their income or socioeconomic status, the findings show that many of them are open to discussing their socioeconomic status in broader terms. Analysis of blog posts allowed the researcher to make inferences about the designers' socioeconomic status based on the lifestyles that they were presenting. Those that are of a higher socioeconomic status shared their lifestyle with their readers by discussing vacations and international travel that they were taking, homes and cars they were purchasing, and renovations they were performing. Designers of a lower socioeconomic status were also open to sharing their difficulties with their readers, such as stress about financial situations, with some also asking for donations in an online "tip jar" such as PayPal and Patreon.

5.7 Summary

This study explored the demographic profile of female home-based textile designers that blog. The findings suggest that the typical female home-based textile-design blogger is a female of indiscriminate age, who is most likely married with 2.3 children, and pursues informal textile design education opportunities in addition to running an HBB from her blog. She will most likely market and offer customizable products on her e-commerce page. Many designers found inspiration from their children and the typical designer with children will probably use her children in her art or as models.

This sample would not exist without the Internet. Textile designers are utilizing the rise of accessible e-commerce, POD, CAD, and informal educational opportunities. This could possibly be fostering new market opportunities and growth for both textile

designers, either experienced or new to the field, and companies that serve textile designers, such as CAD companies and POD companies.

5.8 Limitations

Some limitations that could potentially affect the quality of the research findings and the ability to effectively determine the demographic profile of female home-based textile designers are the inherent biases of using self-reported data. As this research is based on content from blogs, the designers may not report everything in detail, and may not share some demographic information that would be helpful. When writing about yourself, a certain bias may be present that would not otherwise be there. Only English-language blogs were included in the sample, which limits the breadth and depth of possible information. During analysis, it was found that many textile designers have migrated from using blogs to other forms of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest which limited the sample size.

5.9 Implications and Future Research

The preliminary understanding of female textile-design bloggers, which are a relatively new and unstudied group, could impact the business world as well as future research. The results showed that there are limited educational and economic barriers to entry in the textile design field, which may be used to promote and attract new designers. Findings from the study could also be used by others (such as companies, designers, and educators) that are interested in finding ways for females to work that are unable to do so from outside of the home. Finally, understanding the demographic profile of these people will help companies and other designers market products to them in an effective manner,

such as CAD software, POD services, digital products such as Photoshop Brushes, and informal educational experiences such as online classes and tutorials.

For a future study, it would be recommended to collect data from blogs in languages other than English to capture a larger market of designers. Also, the study could be conducted using a mixed methods approach, exploratory sequential, where interviews of textile designers will take place. Since there is not much current research on this unique group, there is still a large amount of research that can be done on topics such as informal education and the entrepreneurial aspect of textile design.

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